

## Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SAUM, UY

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT-ELECT ADDRESSES HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: MONTEVIDEO 2778

IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN EL PAIS ON JULY 27, PRESIDENT-ELECT MENDEZ RESPONDED TO AN ARGENTINE JOURNALIST'S QUESTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AS FOLLOWS:

"Q. DOCTOR, ONE OF THE PROBLEMS MOST COMMENTED ON IN THE WORLD IS THE PRESUMED VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN URUGUAY. WHAT WILL BE YOUR POLICY IN THAT RESPECT?

ANS. THIS IS A THEME WHICH IS SHADED, CLOUDED BY THE BIAS OF COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA. HUMAN RIGHTS HAVE BEEN RESPECTED IN URUGUAY. HERE, THE ONLY THING ABOUT WHICH THE GOVERNMENT COULD HAVE BEEN CRITICIZED INITIALLY, BUT NO LONGER, WAS PROLONGED PERIODS OF DETENTION. HOWEVER, THOSE WHO CRITICIZE THE LONG DETENTIONS (NOTE: PRESUMABLY PRIOR TO FILING FORMAL CHARGES) FORGET SOMETHING WHICH IS FUNDAMENTAL AND UNIVERSAL: THAT HABEAS CORPUS FUNCTIONS IN (PERIODS OF) INSTITUTIONAL NORMALITY.

WHEN A COUNTRY HAS GONE INTO SECURITY MEASURES, ONE OF THE INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS WHICH CEASES IS HABEAS CORPUS. BECAUSE HOW CAN YOU DEFEND PUBLIC ORDER IF YOU ARREST A DANGEROUS CRIMINAL AGAINST WHOM YOU DO NOT HAVE THE (LEGAL) PROOF BUT YOU ARE CERTAIN AS TO HIS GUILTY AND, ACCORDING TO THE CONSTITUTION, YET YOU HAVE TO TURN HIM LOOSE IN 48 HOURS? APART FROM THAT DELAY, THE URUGUAYAN GOVERN-

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MENT CANNOT BE FAULTED.

Q. ARE THERE POLITICAL PRISONERS IN URUGUAY?

ANS. NO. NO ONE IS PERSECUTED FOR HIS IDEAS. WE HAVE SOME 2000 CONDEMNED FOR SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES, BUT NOT FOR THEIR IDEAS. URUGUAY IS A COUNTRY WHICH HAS ALWAYS RESPECTED THE RIGHTS OF ITS CITIZENS AND THOSE OF BROTHER NATIONS. THAT WHICH WE DO NOT TOLERATE, NOR CAN ANYONE ACCEPT, IS THAT A MINORITY GROUP IMPOSE BY MEANS OF CRIMES, BOMBS AND THE IDEOLOGY OF VIOLENCE, SOMETHING WHICH IS NOT SHARED BY THE MAJORITY OF THE URUGUAYAN PROPLE. OUR MISSION IS TO OFFER A PROSPEROUS FUTURE, IN PEACE, IN WHICH EACH CAN EXPRESS HIS IDEAS FREELY BUT (AT THE SAME TIME) RESPECTING THE LAW AND OUR INSTITUTIONS."

2. PRESIDENT-ELECT MENDEZ USED THE WORD "CONDENADOS" (CONDEMNED IN REFERRING TO THOSE CHARGED WITH SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES. THIS IS THE CUSTOMARY USE OF THE WORD IN URUGUAY. WHAT HE HAD IN MIND, AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, ARE SOME 2,000 PERSONS DETAINED FOR SUBVERSIVE REASONS, BUT MANY OF WHOM HAVE NOT YET BEEN SENTENCED.

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